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A PRACTICAL
TABULAR SUMMARY
OF
FRENCH PRONUNCIATION

ADDED TO THE ANALYSIS OF ALL THE SOUNDS OCCURRING IN

FRENCH WORDS.

BY

ALFRED HENNEQUIN, Ph.D.,

INSTRUCTOR IN FRENCH AND GERMAN IN THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN;
AUTHOR OF A SERIES OF FRENCH TEXTBOOKS.

NEW EDITION.

ANN ARBOR, MICH.
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HOW TO USE THESE TABLES.

Do not try to commit the Tables to memory. Begin the study of pronunciation with the *Sound Analysis* on page 13. Look up carefully all the references; then try to read the selection on page 12. Finally, study the Tables themselves.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE study of French Pronunciation presents numerous difficulties which are seldom sufficiently mastered. The manuals on French pronunciation, and the information given in the grammars of the language on this important subject, are too complicated. The lack of system and the too great number of rules is what usually characterizes the works dealing with French pronunciation.

We claim, in this small work, to have reduced all the sounds that occur in French to *ten* comprehensive *Tables*, each of which, by their application to words, will enable the student to overcome several difficulties without memorizing absolute rules.

The sounds of French words are not illustrated until the learner has become familiar with the same in their most simple forms. Instead, therefore, of giving a series of words after each sound, *one* general exercise is placed after the *Tables*—all the words of this exercise being analyzed, in reference to the vowel-sounds and consonants. It will be seen that, owing to this method, the student can easily ascertain the pronunciation of a French word without the help of a teacher.

We do not claim to have exhausted the subject of French pronunciation, and confess that certain peculiarities occurring in a few words have not been explained. We believe, however, that this *Practical Summary*, if carefully studied, will be found a safe and accurate key to the correct pronunciation of the language.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN.
ANN ARBOR, October. 1886.

FRENCH PRONUNCIATION.

TABLE I.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE NAMES OF THE LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET.

1. **A**, pronounced *ah*, i. e., *a* in far. Pronounced with **A**:

| | |
|---|------------------------|
| { | H, i. e., <i>ash</i> . |
| { | K, i. e., <i>ka</i> . |
| { | B, i. e., <i>be</i> . |
| { | C, i. e., <i>ce</i> . |
| { | D, i. e., <i>de</i> . |
2. **E**, pronounced like English *final y*, i. e., *y* in *baby*. Pronounced with **E**:

| | |
|---|------------------------------|
| { | G, i. e., <i>ge</i> (soft). |
| { | P, i. e., <i>pe</i> . |
| { | T, i. e., <i>te</i> . |
| { | V, i. e., <i>ve</i> . |
| { | W, i. e., double <i>ve</i> . |
3. **I**, pronounced *ee*, i. e., *e* in *me*. Pronounced with **I**:

| | |
|---|--|
| { | J, i. e., <i>jee</i> (<i>j</i> = <i>s</i> in <i>pleasure</i>). |
| { | X, i. e., <i>eeks</i> . |
| { | Y, i. e., <i>ee Greck</i> . |
4. **U**,* pronounced *ü* (German), i. e., *ü* in *glück*. Pronounced with **U**:

| | |
|---|--|
| { | Q, i. e., <i>Kü</i> (<i>q</i> = <i>k</i>). |
|---|--|
5. Pronounced alike in French and English:

| | |
|---|--|
| { | F, i. e., <i>eff</i> . |
| { | L, i. e., <i>ell</i> . |
| { | M, i. e., <i>m</i> . |
| { | N, i. e., <i>n</i> . |
| { | O, i. e., <i>O</i> (<i>o</i> in <i>no</i> , rapidly uttered). |
| { | R, = <i>air</i> , i. e., <i>heir-rrr</i> (not <i>arrr</i>). |
| { | S, i. e., <i>ess</i> . |
| { | Z, i. e., <i>zed</i> (<i>English</i> for <i>zee</i>). |

* The French *u* has no equivalent in English. Place the lips as if to whistle, leaving the opening very small. Do not change the position of the lips, and endeavor to pronounce the English *ee*. If possible obtain the correct pronunciation of this sound from a native teacher.

TABLE II.

THE VOWELS AND EQUIVALENT SOUNDS.

1. **A.** See Table I., 1. Has no equivalent in French.
2. **É.** Same as E (letter of the alphabet) in Table I., 2. Equivalent sound: AI* (final).
3. **I.** See Table I., 3. Equivalent sound: Y (vowel—not when a consonant).
4. **O.†** See Table I., 5. Equivalent sounds: $\begin{cases} \text{AU.} \\ \text{EAU.} \end{cases}$
5. **U.** See Table I., 4. Has no equivalent sound.

Remark.—Final consonants are silent, except *c, f, l, r*, which are *usually* sounded at the end of a word. (See Nasal Sounds.)

TABLE III.

THE VOWELS WITH ACCENTS.

Remark.—There are *three* accents in French: 1, The *acute* ('), 2, the *grave* ('), 3, the *circumflex* (^) accent.

1. **À.** $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{See Table I., 1. The accent does not change the sound of} \\ \text{this vowel.} \end{array} \right.$
2. **Â.** $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{See Table I., 1. The sound of the vowel } \hat{A} \text{ is a broadened A.} \end{array} \right.$
3. **É.** See Table I., 2, and Table II., 2.
4. **Ê.** $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Pronounced like } ea \text{ in measure. Equivalent } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{AI (not final).} \\ \text{EI.} \end{array} \right. \end{array} \right.$
5. **Ë.** $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{sounds.} \end{array} \right.$
6. **Î.** See Table I., 3, and Table II., 3. \hat{I} is a broadened I.
7. **Ô.** See Table I., 5, and Table II., 4. \hat{O} is a broadened O.

*The remark on final consonants does not apply to *ai*. If a consonant is added to this sound, such as *aïs, aît*, etc., it assumes then the sound explained in Table III., 4 and 5.

†O is silent in *Laon, paon, faon*.

8. \hat{U} . } See Table I., 4, and Table II., 5.
 9. \hat{U} . } See Table I., 4, and Table II., 5. \hat{U} is a broadened U.

N. B.—The remark added to Table II. applies also to this Table.

TABLE IV.

THE UNACCENTED E AND EQUIVALENT SOUNDS.

1. **E** final, in words of more than one syllable, is always silent.
 ENT in the termination of verbs, is equivalent to the above.
2. **E**, in words of one syllable, having no other vowel, is pronounced like *U* in *bud*.
3. **E*** in the body of a word is almost silent, and if pronounced it takes the sound of *U* in *bud*. See 2.
 EU† and **ŒU** are equivalent to **E** explained in 2.
4. **E** before *d, r, t, z* (mute), or at the beginning of a word, before a double consonant, equivalent to \hat{E} See Table I., 2.
5. **E** before *c, f, l, s*, is equivalent to **E**. See Table III., 4.
6. **E** is silent between *G, A, U*, and *O*.

Remark.—The remark on final consonants applies also to this Table, excepting for **ENT**, which is also equivalent to **E** final (1.) when it is a verbal termination.

NOTA BENE.—It will be noticed that the sounds involved in all the Tables above are those of the *vowels*—with the *three* sounds of **E**—and *their equivalents*. The following table is, therefore, a mere *comparative table*, the explanation of which is found in the preceding ones.

* **E** takes the sound of **A** in *femme, solennel, indemniser*, and in adverbial terminations in *eminent*.

† **EU**, in the conjugation of the verb *avoir*, is equivalent to **U**. See Table I., 4.

TABLE V.

RECAPITULATION OF THE VOWEL SOUNDS AND THEIR EQUIVALENTS.

1. **A**. Rule of *final consonants*, AS, AT, AZ,* etc.
2. **E** (unaccented), when final, silent. In monosyllabic words, or in the body of a word, equal to EU, EUS, EUT, EUX, etc.; ENT, in verbs, silent; E also silent between G, A, U, or O.
3. **É**, equivalents: ET, EZ, ER; equivalents: ÉS, ÉT, ÉV; equivalent: AI (final).
4. **Ê**, equivalents AI (not final), EI; equivalents: AIS, AIT, AIX, etc.; equivalent: E (unaccented, before c, l, f, s).
5. **I**, equivalents: IS, IT, etc.; equivalent: Y (vowel).
6. **O**, equivalents: OS, OT, etc.; equivalents: AU, EAU; equivalents: AUX, EAUX, etc.
7. **U**, equivalents: US, UT, etc.

Remark.—The *grave* accent over À or Û does not change the sound of these vowels.

The *circumflex* accent over a vowel broadens the sound.

TABLE VI.

UNCLASSIFIED VOWEL SOUNDS.

1. **OI**, pronounced like *wa* in *was*. Equivalents: OIS, OIT, OIX, etc.
2. **OU**, pronounced like double *oo* in *food*. Equivalents: OUS, OUT, OUX, etc.

*The final consonants, excepting c, f, l, r, not being sounded at the end of a word, are represented, in this and the following Table, by s, t, z, v, x. The "etc." represents all the others that may be used as silent letters at the end of a word.

TABLE VII.
COMBINED VOWEL SOUNDS.

Remark.—All the sounds of this Table are, in fact, two separate sounds, pronounced rapidly.

1. **AI** equivalent to A and I (see Table I., 1 and 3).
2. **IA** " I and A (see Table I., 3 and 1).
3. **IE** " I and E (see Table I., 3 and 2).
4. **IEU** " I and EU (see Table I., 3, and Table IV., 3).
5. **IU** " I and U (see Table I., 3 and 4)=yü.
6. **OA** " O and A (see Table I., 5 and 1).
7. **OUA** " OU and A (see Table VI., 2, and Table I., 1).
8. **OUI** " OU and I (see Table VI., 2, and Table I., 3)=oo-ee.
9. **UA** " U and A (see Table I., 4 and 1).
10. **UE** " U and E (see Table I., 4 and 2).
11. **UI** " U and I (see Table I., 4 and 3)=ü-i.

NOTA BENE.—The rule of final consonants also applies to this Table.

NASAL COMBINATIONS.

N or M, following a vowel in the same syllable, lose their power as consonants, and form with that vowel a nasal sound. The following vowels form nasal sounds:

1. **A**, having E for equivalent in nasal combinations.
2. **I**, having AI and EI, or E (preceded by I), for equivalent in nasal combinations; also Y (rare).
3. **O**, having no equivalent in nasal combinations.
4. **U**, having EU for equivalent in nasal combinations.

Remark.—The English equivalents for the nasal combinations are all imperfect.

TABLE VIII.

NASAL COMBINATIONS.

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1. With A and equivalents. | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{AN} \\ \text{AM} \\ \text{EN} \\ \text{EM} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{an in} \\ \text{want.} \end{array} \right\}$ | Equivalents formed with the rule of final consonants. |
| 2. With I and equivalents. | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{IN} \\ \text{IM} \\ \text{AIN} \\ \text{AIM} \\ \text{IEN*} \\ \text{EIN} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{an in} \\ \text{unger.} \end{array} \right\}$ | Equivalents formed with the rule of final consonants. |
| 3. With O . | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{ON} \\ \text{OM} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{on in} \\ \text{song,} \end{array} \right\}$ | Equivalents formed with the rule of final consonants. |
| 4. With U and equivalents. | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{UN}^\dagger \\ \text{UM} \\ \text{EUN} \end{array} \right\}$ | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{no equiva-} \\ \text{lent in} \\ \text{English.} \end{array} \right\}$ | Equivalents formed with the rule of final consonants. |

Remark.—1. ION = I + ON. 2. IEN (see 2) = I + EN (or IN). 3. IAN = I + AN. 4. IEN = (in a few rare instances) I + EN, with the sound of 1.

TABLE IX.

SOFTENING OF THE NASAL SOUNDS.

N or M are *no longer* nasal when double, or when between two vowels, or a vowel and a silent H. In such cases the vowel is sounded as a separate vowel.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. AN , etc., becomes A + NN, or A + NE, | $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{or any other vowel instead} \\ \text{of E.} \end{array} \right\}$ |
| 2. IN , etc., " I + NN, or I + NE, | |
| 3. ON , etc., " O + NN, or O + NE, | |
| 4. UN , etc., " U + NN, or U + NE, | |

* EN, preceded by I, sometimes retains the sound of No. 1.

† UN is the *eu* nasal, and has a *slight* resemblance to *un*, in the English word Edmund.

TABLE X.

THE CONSONANTS.

1. **B** is pronounced as in English.
2. **C** is pronounced like *S* before *e* or *i*. Before *a*, *o*, *u*, it is pronounced like *k*. This also occurs when followed by *s*, *l*, *n*, *r*, *t*, *c*.
3. **Ç** is pronounced like *s*.
4. **Ch** is pronounced like English *sh*.
5. **D** is pronounced like English *d*.
6. **F** is pronounced like English *f*.
7. **G** is soft before *e* or *i*. Before *a*, *o*, *u*, or consonants, it is hard.
8. **Gn** is pronounced like *n* in *senior*.
9. **H** is mute in most French words; as *l'homme*, *man*; *l'honneur*, *honor*; *l'héroïne*, *the heroine*, etc. **H** is aspirated in the following words (see remark below):

| | | | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|----------|
| hableur | halte | hareng | hâve | hideux | housse |
| hache | hamac | hargneux | havre | hiérarchie | houx |
| hagard | hameau | haricot | havresac | Hollande | huche |
| haie | hanche | haridelle | héler | homard | huée |
| haillon | hangar | harnais | hennir | honte | huguenot |
| haine | hanneton | harpe | Henri | horde | huit |
| hair | hanter | harpie | héraut | hors | humer |
| haire | harangue | hasard | hérison | hotte | huppe |
| halage | haras | hâter | héron | Hottentot | hure |
| hale | harasser | hausser | héros | houblon | hurler |
| halle | harceler | haut | herse | houille | hussard |
| hallebarde | hardes | haut-bois | heurter | houlette | |
| hallier | hardi | hauteur | hibou | houppe | |

Remark.—The French *h* is never aspirated as in English. There is no union before the aspirated *h*: *les héros* pronounce *lè héros*, not *lezhéros* (see page 12).

10. **J** is pronounced like *s* in pleasure.
11. **K** is pronounced as in English.
12. **L**, usually sounded at the end of a word. *L* or *Ll* are often pronounced like *y* consonant, or like a succession of *I*'s when preceded by *i* in the middle or at the end of the word. The *L* is then *liquid*. The vowel preceding the *I* is pronounced alone, and the *I* with the *L* or *LL*. Example: *travail*=*tra-va-iii*.
13. **M** is pronounced as in English, except in nasal sounds.

14. **N** is pronounced as in English, except nasal sounds.
15. **P** is pronounced as in English. *Ph* like *f*.
16. **Qu** is pronounced like *K*.
17. **R** is pronounced as in English, with greater force.
18. **S** is pronounced as in English. Between two vowels it assumes the sound of *z*, if by linking, *s* by the *z* sound.
19. **So** is pronounced as in English. *Sch* like *sh* in English.
20. **T** is pronounced as in English. *T* before *ion* is pronounced like *s*, and *th* like *T*.
21. **V** and **W** have the pronunciation of *v* in English.
22. **X**, initial, is pronounced like *gz*, and final like *ks*.
23. **Y**, consonant, is equivalent to two *I*'s, and forms a combination with the vowel preceding, which is followed by the second sound of *i*. Example: *payer*=*pai-i er*, *envoyer*=*eu-voi-i er*.
24. **Z** is pronounced as in English.

UNION OF WORDS.

The final consonant of a word is sounded with the initial vowel of the following word, whenever the two words are so connected with each other that there can be no pause between them.

Vos enfants sont-ils arrivés, pronounce *vo zenfants son-til-zarrivés*. *S* sounds like *z*; *d* has the sound of *t*; *g* of *k*; *x* of *z*; *f* of *v*.

Ils ont eu deux enfants, pronounce *il-zon-tu deu-zenfants*.

C'est un grand ami de neuf ans, pronounce *cè-tun gran-tami de neu vans*.

Nous avons deux ou trois amis, pronounce *nou-zavons deu-zou troi-zamis*.

In words ending in *rt*, *rd*, carry on *r*, not *t*, *d*: *tort au raison*, pronounce *to-rou raison*. In words ending in *ct*, carry on *c* as *k*, not *t*: *respect à la vieillesse*, pronounce *respè-ka la vieillesse*. The ear, practice, and taste will be the best guides.

ANALYSIS OF THE SOUNDS IN FRENCH WORDS.

Every work occurring in the short selection given below is analyzed in reference to sound. Let the student look up the references and he will be able to read the selection without difficulty.

JEFFERSON'S OPINION OF THE FRENCH.

Je ne puis quitter ce grand et bon pays sans exprimer mon opinion sur la supériorité de son caractère parmi toutes les nations de la terre. Je n'ai jamais connu de gens plus bienveillants, ni ayant plus de chaleur

et de dévouement dans leurs amitiés choisies. Leur bonté pour les étrangers est incomparable, et l'hospitalité de Paris surpasse tout ce que j'avais imaginé de praticable dans une grande cité. Leurs capacités, aussi, dans les sciences, le caractère communicatif de leurs savants, la politesse, la facilité, et la vivacité de leur conversation, donne un charme à leur société qu'on ne trouve nulle part ailleurs.

SOUND ANALYSIS OF THE WORDS OF THE SELECTION ABOVE.

1. JE—See Consonants, letter *j*, and Table IV., 2.
2. NE, “ “ *n*, “ IV., 2.
3. PUIS, “ “ *p*, “ VII., 11, also rule on final consonants, p. 6, Table 11.
4. QUITTER, “ “ *qu*, “ I., 3, also IV., 4.
5. CE, “ “ *c*, “ IV., 2.
6. GRAND, “ “ *g*, “ VIII., 1; also rule on final consonants.
7. ET—See Table IV., 5.
8. BON—See Consonants, letter *b*, and Table VIII., 3.
9. PAYS, “ “ *p*, and letter *y*; also sound of *ai*, Table III., 4.
10. SANS, “ “ *s*, and Table VIII., 1; also rule of final consonants.
11. EXPRIMER—See Table IV., 4; also consonants *p*, *r*, and *m*; also Table I., 3, and Table IV., 4.
12. MON—See Consonant, letter *m*, and Table VIII., 3.
13. OPINION—See Table I., 3; also Table II., 3; also consonant *n*, and Table VIII., 3.
14. SUR—See Consonants, letter *s*, and Table II., 5; also rule of final consonants.
15. LA—See Consonants, letter *l*, and Table I., 1.
16. SUPÉRIORITÉ—See Consonants, letters *s*, *p*, *r*, *t*, and Table II., 5, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2.
17. DE—See Consonants, letter *d*, and Table IV., 2.
18. SON—See Consonants, letter *s*, and Table VIII., 3.
19. CARACTÈRE—See Consonants, letters *c*, *r*, *t*, and Table II., 1; also Table III., 4; also Table IV., 1.
20. PARMI—See Consonants, letters *p*, *r*, *m*, and Table II., 1, 3.
21. TOUTES—See Consonants, letter *t*, and Table VI., 2; also Table V., 2; also rule of final consonants.
22. LES—See Consonants, letter *l*, and Table IV., 5.

23. NATIONS—See Consonants, letters *n*, *t*, and Table I., 1; also Table VIII., remark; also rule of *final consonants*.
24. DE—See No. 17.
25. LA—See Note 15.
26. TERRE—See Consonants, letters *t*, *r*, and Table IV., 5, 1.
27. JE—See No. 1.
28. N'AI—See Consonants, letter *n*, and Table V., 4.
29. JAMAIS—See Consonants, letters *j*, *n*, and Table II., 1; also Table V., 4.
30. CONNU—See Consonants, letter *c*, and Table IX., 3; also Table II., 5.
31. DE—See No. 17.
32. GENS—See Consonants, letter *g*, and Table VIII., 1; also rule of *final consonants*.
33. PLUS—See Consonants, letters *p*, *l*, and Table II., 5; also rule of *final consonants*.
34. BIENVEILLANTS—See Consonants, letters *b*, *v*, *ll*, and Table VIII., remark (2); also Table V., 4; also Table VIII., 1; also rule of *final consonants*.
35. NI—See Consonants, letter *n*, and Table II, 3.
36. AYANT—See Consonants, letter *y*, and Table VIII., 1; also rule of *final consonants*.
37. PLUS—See No. 33.
38. DE—See No. 31.
39. DÉVOUEMENT—See Consonants, letters *d*, *v*, and Table I., 2; also Table VI., 2; also Table IV., 1; also Table VIII., 1; also rule of *final consonants*.
40. DANS—See Consonants, letter *d*, and Table VIII., 1, and rule of *final consonants*.
- 41.—LEURS—See Consonants, letters *l*, *r*, and Table IV., 3, and rule of *final consonants*.
42. AMITIÉS—See Consonants, letter *t*, and Table IX., 1; also Table VII., 3; also rule of *final consonants*.
43. CHOISIES—See Consonants, letters *ch*, *s*, and Table VI., 1; also Table II., 3; also Table V., 2; also rule of *final consonants*.
44. LEUR—See No. 41.
45. BONTÉ—See Consonants, letters *b*, *t*, and Table VIII., 3; also Table II., 2.
46. POUR—See Consonants, letters *p*, *r*, and Table VI., 2; also rule for *final consonants*.
47. LES—See No. 22.

48. ÉTRANGERS—See Consonants, letters *t*, *r*, *g*, and Table II., 2; also Table VIII., 1; also Table IV., 4; and rule for final consonants.
49. EST—See Table IV., 5.
50. INCOMPARABLE—See Consonants, letter *p*, and Table VIII., 2, 3; also Table II., 1; also Table IV., 1.
51. ET—See Table IV., 5.
52. L'HOSPITALITÉ—See Consonants, letters *h*, *s*, *p*, *t*, *l*, *t*, and Table II., 4; also Table II., 3, 1, 2.
53. DE—See No. 17.
54. PARIS—See Consonants, letter *p*, and Table II., 1, 3; also rule for final consonants.
55. SURPASSE—See Consonants, letters *s*, *p*, and Table II., 5, 1; also Table IV., 1.
56. TOUT—See Consonants, letter *t*, and Table VI., 2, also rule for final consonants.
57. CE—See Consonants, letter *c*, and Table IV., 2.
58. QUE—See Consonants, letter *q*; also Table IV., 2.
59. J'AVAIS—See Consonants, letters *j*, *v*, and Table I., 1; also Table V., 4; also rule for final consonants.
60. IMAGINÉ—See Consonants, letter *g*; also Table IX., 2; also Table II., 3, 2.
61. DE—See No. 17.
62. PRACTICABLE—See Consonants, letters *p*, *c*, *t*, *b*, *l*, and Table II., 1, 3, 1; also Table IV., 1.
63. DANS—See Consonants, letter *d*, and Table VIII., 1; also rule for final consonants.
64. UNE—See Table IX., 4.
65. GRANDE—See Consonants, letters *g*, *d*, and Table VIII., 1; also Table IV., 1.
66. CITÉ—See Consonants, letters *c*, *t*, and Table II., 3, 2.
67. LEUR—See No. 41.
68. CAPACITÉ—See Consonants, letters *c*, *p*, *t*, and Table II., 1, 3, 2.
69. AUSSI—See Consonants, letter *s*, and Table V., 6; also Table II., 3.
70. DANS—See No. 63.
71. DANS—See No. 63.
72. LES—See No. 22.
73. SCIENCES—See Consonants, letters *s*, *sc*, *c*, and Table VIII., 2 (foot-note); also Table IV., 1; also rule for final consonants.
74. LE—See Consonants, letter *l*, and Table IV., 2.
75. CARACTÈRE—See Consonants, letters *c*, *r*, *t*, also No. 19.

